

# NEWS RELEASE

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**  
**Friday, May 1, 2009**

## **US Praises Morocco's "Comprehensive Counterterrorism Approach" and "International Cooperation" to Combat Rising al-Qaeda Threat in Sahara**

**State Dept. report to Congress highlights need for "continued vigilance" in a region threatened by al-Qaeda and other terrorist groups**

**Washington, DC (May 1, 2009)** – Yesterday, the US State Department praised the Kingdom of Morocco's "comprehensive counterterrorism approach" as it works with the US and its regional and international partners to combat the growing transnational threat from al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and other terrorist groups.

"The Government of Morocco, and frequently the King himself, regularly and strongly condemned terrorist acts, wherever they occurred," said the annual report to Congress submitted by the State Dept.'s Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism. "The Moroccan government pursued a comprehensive counterterrorism approach that, building on popular rejection of terrorism, emphasizes neutralizing existing terrorist cells through traditional law enforcement and preemptive security measures, and prevented terrorist recruitment through comprehensive counter-radicalization policies."

The report detailed the success Morocco has seen from its multi-faceted strategy and social reforms to combat terrorism, which goes far beyond "traditional security measures." Specifically, the report highlighted Morocco's \$1.2 billion National Human Development Initiative "aimed at ameliorating the socio-economic factors that terrorists exploit" as well as the official sanction of *mourchidates*, or female spiritual guides, whose role is to promote moderation and religious tolerance in mosques across the Kingdom and in Moroccan immigrant communities abroad.

The report also stressed that a key to Morocco's counterterrorism efforts has been "its emphasis on international cooperation" which has helped Moroccan authorities "disrupt plots to attack Moroccan, U.S. and other Western-affiliated targets, and aggressively investigat[e] numerous individuals associated with international terrorist groups."

"For more than 220 years, Morocco and the United States have continuously worked together to combat security threats to both countries—from piracy on the high seas in the late 1700's to today's increasing terrorist challenge in the Sahara and elsewhere," said Robert M. Holley, executive director of the Moroccan American Center for Policy. "The US and Morocco must work even more closely with its international partners on these critical issues to protect and advance the lives of millions in North Africa, as well as the broader international community."

For the complete US State Department report, please visit:  
<http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/crt/2008/index.htm>

Yesterday's State Department report underscores many of the same concerns raised in recent weeks by 233 Members of Congress in a [letter to President Barack Obama](#), which states that "[v]ital U.S. interests in North Africa are increasingly challenged by growing regional instability." The Members—representing a bipartisan majority of the House of Representatives as well as the highest ranking members of the Democratic and Republican leadership—called on President Obama to

strengthen US support for Morocco's compromise autonomy proposal to peacefully resolve the Western Sahara conflict, which they consider to be the "single greatest obstacle impeding the security cooperation necessary to combat this transnational threat."

In March, a special report, "Why the Maghreb Matters," released by the Potomac Institute for Policy Studies and the Conflict Management Program at Johns Hopkins University, presented the recommendations of a distinguished panel including former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, Ret. General Wesley Clark and former Ambassador Stuart Eizenstat. The panel noted the 400% spike in terrorist attacks in the region since 9/11 and advocated increased US engagement with Morocco and other North Africa nations to protect American security interests and to thwart a growing peril from al-Qaeda terrorists in the Sahara.

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**The Moroccan American Center for Policy (MACP)** is a non-profit organization whose principal mission is to inform opinion makers, government officials and interested publics in the United States about political and social developments in Morocco and the role being played by the Kingdom of Morocco in broader strategic developments in North Africa, the Mediterranean, and the Middle East. For more, please visit [www.moroccanamericanpolicy.org](http://www.moroccanamericanpolicy.org)

*This material is distributed by the Moroccan American Center for Policy on behalf of the Government of Morocco.  
Additional information is available at the Department of Justice in Washington, DC.*

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:  
Monday, May 4, 2009**

## **UN Security Council Reaffirms Support for Morocco's "Serious & Credible Efforts" to Peacefully Resolve W. Sahara Conflict**

**Member States stress need for greater regional cooperation, and confidence-building measures for "making progress on the human dimension of the conflict"**

**Washington, DC (May 4, 2009)** – In response to the Security Council's unanimous adoption of Resolution 1871 last week, which extended the mandate of MINURSO, the UN mission to the Western Sahara, Moroccan American Center for Policy executive director Robert M. Holley issued the following statement:

*"We applaud the Security Council's explicit and repeated recognition of Morocco's 'serious and credible' efforts to resolve this longstanding conflict. As US Ambassador to the United Nations Susan Rice pointed out, poor relations between Morocco and Algeria resulting from the Western Sahara situation have prevented regional cooperation on issues of urgency. The conflict has gone on for far too long; it is not only in North Africa's economic and security interests, but those of the United States as well, that this decades-old dispute be resolved.*

*"Equally important is the Security Council's recognition of the 'humanitarian dimension' of the issue. For more than 30 years, thousands of Sahrawi refugees have lived as hostages, separated from their family members, without adequate food, water and medical supplies. This resolution welcomes "humanitarian confidence building measures" such as expansion of the existing family visit program through means of ground transportation in addition to the current UN-operated charter flights, and enhanced documentation for the refugees. These would be important steps toward restoring some quality of life to those living in the Polisario camps in Algeria. However, a true and sustained improvement in the quality of life of the refugees can only be achieved through the resolution of the broader political issue.*

*"The parties must return to the negotiating table, without preconditions, for substantive negotiations. We encourage the parties to proceed on a basis of realism, and for the US to assist by showing leadership with financial and economic support for specific measures that help ease the suffering and humanitarian plight of the refugees."*

For the full text of the resolution and statements by UNSC Member States, please visit:  
<http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2009/sc9650.doc.htm>

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